

**Statement on the Kennedy-Murray
Amendment to Proposed Education
Flexibility Partnership Legislation**

March 11, 1999

I have long supported the ed-flex concept, and I was pleased when the congressional leadership decided to take up this bill as one of its first matters of business. Today, however, the Senate used this bill to undermine one of our most important educational achievements—an initiative to hire 100,000 well-prepared teachers to reduce class size in the early grades to a national average of 18. The Senate not only voted down an amendment to ensure long-term funding for this initiative but passed an amendment that would allow local school districts to completely opt out of class size reduction. I will work hard for the elimination of this amendment in conference. We should be working together to make continued progress on obvious national needs such as reducing class size—not attempting to tear down the bipartisan work we did last year to address this problem.

**Statement on House Action To
Support Use of United States
Armed Forces in Kosovo**

March 11, 1999

I am pleased with the House vote which demonstrates the broad, bipartisan support for our efforts to bring peace to Kosovo. This vote sends a clear message to both parties that it is time now to sign an agreement that stops the fighting in Kosovo and creates real self-government for the Kosovar people. The vote confirms the strong commitment of the United States to continue our efforts to provide the leadership necessary to bring about a peaceful resolution to this conflict.

**Proclamation 7173—National Older
Workers Employment Week, 1999**

March 11, 1999

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

One of our Nation's most valuable but least appreciated assets is its workers aged 55 and older. Older Americans bring to the workplace sound judgment, broad knowledge and experience, proven problem-solving abilities, and a strong work ethic. Despite their often impressive qualifications, however, older men and women who attempt to change jobs or seek new careers frequently encounter difficulties. Some employers mistakenly fear that older workers lack the skills and flexibility to learn new technologies and procedures; others think that they no longer have the energy and motivation to compete in today's fast-paced and stressful work environment; still others are unwilling to pay older workers the salaries they deserve and prefer instead to hire younger, less experienced employees at lower rates. Such employers are short-sighted.

Americans are living longer, healthier, more active lives. In the next century, as our economy continues to expand and the demand for skilled workers continues to grow, older citizens will become an increasingly vital resource. If our Nation is to thrive in the 21st century, we must encourage businesses to recognize the rich potential of older workers, to make the most of their knowledge, skills, and experience, and to retain qualified older employees in the workforce.

We must also remain vigilant in protecting the rights and well-being of older Americans. Laws such as the Age Discrimination Act, the Older Americans Act, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act protect older workers from age bias and discrimination and help assure their fair treatment in the workplace. In addition, the Department of Labor and the Department of Health and Human Services, through such efforts as the Senior

Community Service Employment Program and the programs of the Administration on Aging, assist older workers who give their time and energy to contribute to our Nation's economy.

As we observe this special week, let us remember with appreciation the many invaluable contributions older workers make to our country's progress and prosperity, and let us resolve to give older Americans an equal opportunity to participate in the workplace.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 14 through March 20, 1999, as National Older Workers Employment Week. I urge employers across the Nation to recognize the energy and ability of older workers, and I encourage public officials responsible for job placement, training, and related services to intensify their efforts throughout the year to help older workers find suitable jobs and training.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 15.

Remarks on Arrival in Hope, Arkansas

March 12, 1999

I must say, I did not expect to see you here when I heard it was cold and rainy, and I am very grateful to you for coming. I want to thank all the Federal and State and local officials who came out to say hello to me there at the airport.

I'm delighted to be here. I want to just get out and shake hands with all of you and say again how very much I appreciate you coming out. I hope none of the kids get sick standing in this rain, and I hope it's some-

thing that when you dry off will always be a good memory for you.

I'd like to say just briefly to all the children that are here, you know, I'm coming home because we're going to dedicate the house that I lived in for the first 4 years of my life. And a lot of what I learned that was good that I took with me for the rest of my life I learned back then. And I want every one of you to believe that people from Rosston and Chidester and all the other small places around here—doesn't matter where you came from in life, it matters what you do with your life.

So make the most of your schools and have a wonderful time. And again, you'll never know how much I appreciate you being here. I was stunned when I saw the crowd out here, and I knew what the weather was. I always say that the people here stuck with me through rain or shine, and now it is literally true.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:15 p.m. on the tarmac at Hope Municipal Airport.

Remarks at the Dedication Ceremony for the Clinton Birthplace in Hope

March 12, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. My friend Tilmon Ross, thank you for the prayer. And Joe, thank you for the introduction.

I have to say that I'm here with mixed feelings. This is the coldest March the 12th in the last 100 years in Hope, Arkansas. [*Laughter*] You have totally destroyed the case I have been making for global warming for the last 5 years. [*Laughter*]

You know, we were out at the airport and the Congressman, the State officials, the judge, the country officials, the city board, everybody came out there, and it was worse there than it is here, believe it or not. It was raining a whole lot harder; the wind was blowing. And there must have been 600 people out there—all those school kids—I'm sure I made a lot of money for the hospitals in the area. [*Laughter*] There will be people